

MI **NURSES** Association

MICHIGAN NURSES ASSOCIATION

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October 2, 2018

Re: House Bills 6203 and 6204

To: House Law and Justice Committee

Dear Chairman Kesto and committee members:

I am writing in support of House Bills 6203 and 6204. As president of the Michigan Nurses Association, which represents 13,000 staff RNs and health professionals across the state, I can attest that violence in the workplace a priority concern of health professionals. We applaud Representative Vaupel for his legislation to attempt to address this problem, and Chairman Kesto for enabling this discussion to take place in his committee.

Many healthcare workers report being punched, spat on, pushed, kicked, and otherwise assaulted or harassed on a regular basis as they do their jobs.

There is no doubt that workers in healthcare settings deserve the same enhanced status that the law provides for categories such as police officers, firefighters, EMTs, conservation officer and others who deal with the public in high-stress situations. In fact, health professionals are sometimes at even higher risk because they cannot leave the situation, being obligated to continue providing care, often in tight quarters with agitated patients or visitors lashing out at them. This violence can affect not only employees but also other patients and families, adding danger to what should be a healing environment.

This type of violence should not be accepted as part of the job; rather, it should be treated, when appropriate, as the crime that it is.

MNA is pleased to see the scope of these bills because, unlike other proposed legislation, they do not limit consequences to those who assault only certain workers in healthcare settings, or workers in only one part of a facility. Our organization did not support that version of a bill, because all workers deserve to be valued equally.

While further changes in workplaces and additional public policy are needed to more fully prevent and manage violence in the healthcare setting, HB 6203 and 6204 are important steps that will provide another tool for parties interested in reducing violence in healthcare settings.

Sincerely,

Jamie Brown, RN
President, Michigan Nurses Association